

9752U

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS - Burwood - 1984

THE HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #5 Circumcision of the Spirit

Reading: Galatians 6

My dearly beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, b&s, we have been taught by the apostle that we are free from Law! and being free from Law, of course, we also have been freed from the pride of human achievement and that is freedom indeed. If you don't have to prove that you're good, that's real freedom ! The apostle tells us that in that newly found freedom, where we don't have to serve ourselves, we have, therefore, b&s, ample opportunity and time to serve others. That's what the truth is all about! and you know, b&s, when I say that that's what the truth is all about, the apostle says that, you know, in Galatians, he says, 'if we bear one another's burdens, that fulfills the Law of Christ'. Nothing is lacking in our service when we are available in God's service, to serve one another. Paul says that fulfills the Law of Christ, and in that serving one another, b&s, it is, of course, a matter of cooperation, and it's the question of cooperation that's going to occupy the first few verses of Galatians 6.

You know, there's something very wonderful here about the 6th chapter of Galatians, as the apostle talks about the principles of cooperation. Very often when you expound these principles to people, it is quite often that people come up to you and say, 'You know, John, you're saying things exactly how I think', and you talk to people because you know how they think, and Paul knows how we think. When you read these things, you understand in your ecclesial life, that he understands perfectly how human nature reacts one with the other, and how there's a great need, b&s, for us to recognize that! He touches upon, in this 6th chapter, upon a very sensitive issue when it comes to cooperation among brethren and sisters. But let's look at it!

Remember the point that he made in chapter 5 that we've got to walk in the Spirit in an individual sense. Each of us have got to make our own way to the kingdom in that walking in the Spirit, and not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. But, b&s, and this is extremely important, when he said before that we have to 'walk in the Spirit' in chapter 5 verse 25, as I mentioned last evening, he's talking about walking in line; now the point that he's making is this, that our individual responsibility involves a collective responsibility to the rest of the ecclesia. Now let me put it another way! If you came to me and said, 'salvation is an individual matter', I may or may not agree with you and

yet,

b&s, when we make that statement (and it's been made on numerous occasions) everyone says, 'amen', but you know it might be completely and utterly false; because if you mean by the statement that 'salvation is a individual matter', that you have a personal relationship with God and you conduct your own personal life in the way that you think the Word of God dictates that, and that's got nothing to do with your brethren and sisters, and it's completely divorced from what they do or your relationship with them, then that is false doctrine! Salvation is not an individual matter in that sense; but if you mean that salvation is an individual matter because it involves you collectively with the ecclesia, then I'd agree with you. You know, b&s, that's the burden of what the apostle Paul is going to tell us this morning, and as much as I'd sometimes like to go away and say to myself, 'blow the rest of the ecclesia, salvation is an individual matter', and absolve myself from all my collective responsibilities, that's an utter impossibility in God's sight! I am bound up with you, and you're bound up with me, whether we like it or not! and we will never ever, ever, walk into God's kingdom on the basis of believing that salvation is an individual matter, because it isn't. Unfortunately, b&s, we've got to learn to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the ecclesia, the pillar and ground of the truth; and you're not allowed to behave yourself outside the house of God. We're all bound up together in this matter! so walking in the Spirit in an individual sense, is exactly the same as walking in line with the rest of the ecclesia. There's no way that we can divorce those two ideas. That's where our individual responsibility comes in a collective cooperation with everyone else in that meeting. Now if you don't believe it, listen to these words!

Paul says this, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, bear ye your own burden; everyman shall bear his own burden; bear ye one another's burdens'. That's the truth of the matter! so in other words, if I've got to bear my burden, my burden is **to bear yours!** and your individual burden is to bear **mine!** and that fulfils the law of Christ. Why does it? you think, b&s, never have we set before us in God's Word, anything that hasn't got reason behind it! Now I'll go over that again, some of you may have got the point already, but let's everyone get it; **bear ye one another's burdens** is equivalent to **every man shall bear his own burden!** So we find in verse 2 of chapter 6, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Verse 5, 'For every man shall bear his own burden', so that your individual burden is everyone else's. Everyone has the responsibility to help everyone else, and that's your individual burden to bear everyone else's burden. Now that is to fulfill the law of Christ, of course, it is! How do you think we would stand, b&s, where do you think we would stand if the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world as He did, and because of all the abuse that He received from fellow man, and the lack of support and the weakness that He had to put up with, He got exasperated by it, and He went to His heavenly Father and said, 'salvation is an individual matter! I've got a personal relationship with God and that's all that matters!' where do you think we would be today? But He didn't do that, He went to that cross, b&s, not only because it was a commandment of God; not only because He Himself stood in relationship to the principles of crucifixion; but, b&s, He went primarily to that cross, to die for us, and if He had have taken the attitude that salvation is an individual

matter, there would never be today on the face of the earth, a body known as the Christadelphian brotherhood; and that's fulfilling the law of Christ. Christ Jesus came into the world with an individual responsibility, and the individual responsibility was to die for the whole world, and all we're asked to do, is bear one another's burden in the ecclesia! and that's fulfilling the law of Christ.

I think that's wonderful! and sometimes it's very hard to swallow, because we do have our ups and downs in ecclesial life. People get disgruntled and very critical of others. They start talking about cliques in the ecclesias, about family relationships and that big families seem to keep together to the exclusion of all else; about gossipers and about criticism that others make of their children. Some families seem to harbour these little things, and as they start looking this way and that way, 'oh, we're not in the family circle because we're not sort of related to that big family', or one of their children is criticized at Sunday School for not doing this, or not doing that, 'they have no right to talk about my child like that'; and brethren and sisters talk like this and they shouldn't talk like that, and they have this point of view, and really you know, they shouldn't have this point of view'. After a while, b&s, they get further and further and further back on themselves and so they say to themselves, 'well, salvation is an individual matter anyway!' A false doctrine! and they've missed the point of that chapter. There's no escaping, b&s, and it's a matter of peering through the gloom of that personal criticism, and seeing the ecclesia for what it is, the children of the living God, and getting back in there, and bearing your own burden, in taking upon yourself, your individual responsibility to bear everyone else's. Now that is a wonderful teaching that's in the 5th and 6th chapters of Galatians; and that's the **freedom** that Christ has given us. He's made us free to become slaves of others. It's absolutely marvellous!

'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted'. Now you have a look at how the two ideas are brought together here, b&s, now try and follow this because it's absolutely beautifully thought out by the apostle. I'll read that again, verse 1, can you see the two burdens in this verse and how that they are linked together? 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted'. Now let me give you a graphic illustration of that! So maybe I consider myself spiritual; maybe I think that I am walking in the Spirit. Poor old John here, he's not walking in the Spirit, as a matter of fact, (he isn't actually; he left his home last night and he's suppose to be lead by the Spirit, and what happens? his car runs out of spirit at the stoplight). But, getting back to the point of issue, I'm considering myself spiritual, so John's on the skids and he needs help, so I think, Johnny Finan, now he's in a real fix, I'll go help my brother! Because, you see, I've got to bear his burden! so I put my coat on and check I've got keys and I jump in my car and I drive around to Johnny's but on the way I think to myself, 'hang on Martin, how are you going to approach him? I've got to approach him in the spirit of meekness, oh, that's okay, why? because I've got to bear my own burden. On my way there, I've got to think to myself, what's John's problem? and I think about it, and gee, really, I've got that problem myself. Although I may be in the same fix as poor old John,

it's my problem too! So whilst I'm on my way to bear his burden, I've got my own to bear. 'My own to bear', is considering myself 'lest I also be tempted'. So you see the point of issue, is that salvation is an individual matter in the sense that I've got a burden to bear, but I've got to remember that I can be tempted also, but nonetheless, I've got to get around there and try to bear his burden with that attitude. There is bearing two burdens if ever you've got it; remembering your own burden whilst you're helping him with his. You know, b&s, if we did that, we would approach people in the spirit of meekness.

You know, the Lord Jesus Christ expounded wisdom like this. He told His disciples that they needed knowledge; He went on to point out to them that knowledge must be applied in a right way, and that's wise! Here are the facts, now what do I do with the facts? I do that with the facts, so we say, wisdom is the application of the facts. We imagine it's the end of the process, but there's one more step to take; there's you're facts, this is the best way to go about it, and the other step is the attitude of mind with which you go about it. So, here are the facts, I'm going to put it like that so that it makes the greatest impact, and now I have to see myself, my own personal attitude has to be applied with meekness. So there's **knowledge, wisdom and the meekness of wisdom!** Those are the three steps, and they come about because we we're trying to help someone, whilst at the same time, we lump our own burden and realize that we could be in that situation. Now that's one illustration that you would see that in operation almost every week in your ecclesia, in one form or another. Or you'd be involved in that sort of thing, and you'd know full well, b&s, that they are real problems in your life, real problems indeed!

Now he goes on and he says, 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the Law of Christ'. It does fulfil the Law of Christ, for says the apostle in Romans 15, 'we that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak; and not to please ourselves for **even Christ pleased not Himself. As it is written, the reproaches of them that approach thee, are fallen on me**'. So to fulfil the Law of Christ therefore, is to accept the reproach of others while you're trying to help them. You know, b&s, to fulfil the Law of Christ, you translate that in Hebrew terms, 'fulfil the law of Messiah' and the Jewish concept of Messiah was nothing like that, but Paul's concept of Messiah was, and he saw Messiah as One who was coming into the world, to lump everybody's burdens, and he saw that as his individual responsibility, that's how he saw it! As I said, if He hadn't died for us, we're going to get nowhere.

BUT, he says in verse 3, 'If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself', in other words, you know, you go to help another person, and how we love to relate stories of how we help people! Now you think about this, b&s, and we're touching on sensitive issues now because you're going to squirm in you seat, because I'm squirming on my feet while I'm telling you this, because I do it! I practice this evil! You love to tell people how you can handle problems, why do you? because

you think yourself to be something when you're nothing! and how you love to relate your ecclesial circumstances one to the other, that b&s so-in-so had a problem and I was called out at night; and I spent so many nights out on problems and I'm on the phone counselling people. You think yourself to be something when your nothing and that goes on every day of our ecclesial life, and I do it, and you do it, and you know you do it! and we're imagining, b&s, that we're something when we're nothing. If we would only see ourselves as relating to ourselves because the best way to help a person, is to understand that you're in the same weakness, and you can speak strongly about that manner, because **it's your problem**, then we'd get somewhere. We would relate to that person and perhaps while relating to them with the problem, not to melt it down into a great world of self sympathy, but if we can relate to a person, we might extricate them from the problem, and we'd come out of it **together!** But no! we think ourselves to be something when we're nothing, and relate to others how we've counselled this one that way, and counselled this one this way, and told this one how to do this, and told someone else how to do that. We've set ourselves up as a paragon of righteousness, and all we've done, b&s, if very often by that attitude, is to cause the poor creature to sink lower and lower in their low estate, because they can never feel in themselves that they could ever be like us, because we're so darn good! We think ourselves something when we're nothing and Paul says they deceive themselves!

BUT, he says, verse 4, 'let every man prove his own work', test his own work, how would you do that? Well, he told the Corinthians, he said, 'Look, you compare yourselves with yourselves and you're not wise'. You know, b&s, it's a human trait, it goes like this (if you've never thought like this you're not human). You're in the meeting and you might not think in exactly these terms but this is what the subconscious does for you; you think to yourself, 'many are called and few are chosen', wow! that's a frightening prospect, many are called but few are chosen, now I've got to get in that few, so the best way to get into that few, is to start eliminating a few others; and if I can see that I'm doing a little bit better than the majority, well by the process of elimination, it's not really so bad! So we see everyone else's problems, and we compare ourselves with ourselves to give ourselves a comfortable confidence, that we are really among that few! But Paul says, 'you don't do that! that's comparing yourselves with yourselves', so if you're sitting in the meeting Sunday morning and you start looking down the hall and you think to yourself, 'many are called and few are chosen' Christ is coming and He'll be here any day now and we're going to face that awful judgment seat, I've got to get into that kingdom, I've just got to get into that kingdom; well, I think Christ will like me really, because I do a lot of work in the truth and I lead Burwood weekend for a dozen years in succession, and I've done this and I've done that, and those brethren don't do that, you know! I'm a pretty good chat really when you consider matters, you know, if you compare me with others, until your eye goes down the hall, b&s, row by row by row until it comes to the table at the front. Oh, that's a different matter! and when it rests on the table at the front, and you start to compare yourselves with that One, 'let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of **that bread**, and drink of **that cup!**' You

think of that!

Then your eye comes back down the hall and you think about all those really bad things, that you really thought about brethren and sisters. You think to yourself, 'well, really you know, I suppose I did think bad things, but then they did bad things', and then you read the words in Corinthians, b&s, that preface the memorial feast; you look at that table and you listen to the words and Paul says, 'The **same night** in which He was **betrayed**', oh dear! the **same night**! in which He was betrayed, didn't He have a reason, b&s, to draw away from that feast and say, 'Haha! salvation is an individual matter! **the same night in which He was betrayed**; He didn't pull back however! 'this is My body given for **you**', and Judas was sitting there! Now that's where we have to compare ourselves, and when that comparison is rightly made, b&s, then we're not deceiving ourselves, but **we proved** our own work by a comparison with that One! Then says the apostle, 'we have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another', and the word 'rejoicing' there means 'to boast' (2745), we can make a boast within ourselves, but what are we going to boast about, b&s? You know what we'll boast about? we'll be so reduced as the apostle says in another place, in 2 Corinthians 12, he said, 'I boast in my infirmities; for when I am weak, **then I am strong**', and when we are reduced to a quivering wreck at that table, and we compare ourselves against that One, in the same night as He was betrayed, that was His attitude of mind for His brethren, when we are reduced by that, b&s, and we're sitting there absolutely feeling really wretched, then inside we can say, 'yes, I've got a boast to make to God; oh, I'm in such desperate need of Him', that's a boast indeed! As the Psalmist says 'we make our boast in God, all the day long', and we glory or boast, says the apostle, in our infirmities, for when we are weak, then we're strong.

Now, that's what Paul is dealing with here, he's dealing with a hidden motive, and you know, what he's doing is this, he's going to bring out two figures in a minute, both have one thing in common, he's talking about motive, you see, hidden motive, things that you and I can't see in each other. So the two things he's going to raise is **circumcision** and **sowing seed**. He's going to talk about circumcision and he's going to talk about sowing to the Spirit; circumcision, of course, you would well and truly understand, is hidden, and when you put a seed in the ground it's hidden; one's a motive which is a mark in the flesh, and the other one is a thing hidden extraneous to the flesh which will be developed **entirely by the Spirit**.

They stand for motives, b&s, within our frame, which you can't see, which are altogether to be revealed as a mark in our flesh or they're going to be revealed as that which we have within us, the incorruptible seed of the Word of God; and it will be seen in the way in which we act towards each other, as a manifestation of our fruits. But in both cases, hidden motives, 'let every man prove in himself what he's doing, and when he is able to get a balance of thinking in his mind, about what he's doing about bearing another one's burdens, fully realizing his own responsibilities and weakness, let him boast in

here, before God, and let that be sufficient. Now that is a wonderful, wonderful section of scripture, b&s, and something I believe, which applies to everyone of us, probably every day of our life!

So he goes on to tell us, 'for every man shall bear his own burden'. You know, actually the Greek word, they say has been understood here to represent a cargo in a ship, which cannot be transferred from port to port, that is, it has to be carried from port to port, you can't transfer it at sea. So once the burden is put on our back, there's no way we can get it off until the kingdom; we've got to go from port to port, it's a shipping cargo. So when we accept the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism, b&s, and we take upon ourselves the Law of Messiah, that's on our back until the kingdom, and it can't be transferred! and what we're lumping on our back is an individual burden which is saying to us, that burden is everyone else's! So we're all bound up together in a collective responsibility!

Now let Paul give us another illustration which you can all understand, because he knows how we think so well, this man! Listen to it! Verse 6, 'Let him that is taught in the Word communicate (2842- 'koinonia', have fellowship, cooperate with) him that teacheth in all good things'. Now where do you get a division of thought and an odious comparison between the relative strengths and abilities of brethren BUT in the speaking work. So Paul's argument is this; we have an individual responsibility to bear collectively each other's burdens. Now he says, 'let's give another illustration'; (let the study leader, no, I'm wrong! let's put it the way he put it because he puts it the right way) let the brother and sister listening to the study leader fellowship the study leader in what he's trying to say and do! Now you know yourself, b&s, this in our ecclesial circle, where we're a group of people who spend a lot of time sitting and listening to talks, (bore the world to tears!) But we come here day after day, and we sit and listen to a lot of talk. It so happens that I'm up here and you're out there; and here's a graphic illustration of Paul's point. I'm standing here as one brother and you're out there as a 100 odd people; you are the ecclesia collectively and I, on your behalf, an individual who's speaking for you and trying to expound the Word to you, and we're trying to have a rapport one with the other. You might see me as having an individual burden, and you might see yourselves as having a collective burden; but it's not so! Paul says, you out there have really got to enter into my feelings and we've got to fellowship each other, in the work that we're doing right now! But it doesn't happen like that! Let me tell you how it happens!

This is sometimes how it happens! These are the works of the flesh! I'm standing here and I'm teaching you, you see, and if I'm not careful, I could be thinking in the back of my head, as a brother yawns or a sister looks around the hall, I could think to myself, 'idiots, they're not taking this in at all; they haven't got a brain in their head, if they only knew how valuable it was that I'm saying, oh! they'd listen carefully! Look at the hours I've put into this!. Ah, poor wretches, they probably couldn't do that, they wouldn't have the brains! I've got to feel sorry for them! Well, I'm not having fellowship with you, b&s, I've got away, away from that!'

You're sitting out there and you're thinking to yourselves, 'It's alright for him, he's got all the help in the world, he can do this and he can do that, he works for Keith Gore and they do nothing! and he's got all these sort of advantages, if only I had his advantages, I'd be able to do that too! It's alright for him to talk like he does, you know, in his private life I've seen a lot of things in that brother's life, where he doesn't match up with what he's saying!' That is **true** what is said, b&s, and don't tell me it's not! and you go to a bible school, or you don't go to a bible school and people come home and you say, 'well, how did the bible school go? Well, this brother was alright, he was not so bad, and he was terrible. I liked that one better, I didn't go so much for this one, and I tolerated him!'

Verse 6, 'Let him that is taught in the Word be at one and join in the feelings and have fellowship with the teacher'. Very difficult, very difficult! and there's a way around it, you know: I get around it like this! I think to myself, we are the body of Christ; by no choice of mine, I never chose this vocation in the truth, I never asked to be a speaker. But people say, well, they want me to speak, so I'm a mouth, I accept that! and I accept the fact, b&s, that many of you are, like me, mouths when it's your opportunity to speak; but a lot of you are hands, feet, but all of us are heart. It's just like I think to myself, I'm speaking for you, and you're speaking through me, and while I'm teaching you, I'm teaching myself and I don't see any difference in that! In that, there is a fellowship and we're accepting our individual responsibility in a collective way in which we study the Word of God. Now you think about that! you think about the statement that's made very often, 'you know, John, I don't go to the ecclesial class anymore; I find I can get more out of the Word at home in my private study'. People expect me to commend that! oh dear! You know, b&s, private study is absolutely essential, and so is collective study, and it is true, that people have different makeups and some brethren and sisters will never be able to do their own private study to the extent that they would like; and many of them are genuine in that they don't make that as an excuse. I know people who shed tears over the bible, who genuinely try to understand God's Word and who cry because they can't understand it! It is absolutely necessary for those people to get in proximity to those who can understand it; and they sit in study classes and are absolutely thrilled to bits; what if everyone else in the meeting said, 'oh, I don't come to the class anymore, you know, I really get more out of my own private study!' Pathetic! if that's our attitude, b&s, to the ecclesia. That's not communication between teacher and taught, taught and teacher at all! There's got to be, b&s, a full appreciation and realization that we're not all the same, and to share whatever God has given us, in the advantages of ability, that come upon us, not because, b&s, of any intrinsic value, but because it is a fact of life, and that God has made it so. That's what Paul is saying, 'Let him that is taught in the Word really enter into the feelings of the teacher, and **be not deceived because God's not mocked**'. You know, b&s, that statement immediately following, teacher and taught, is wonderful in its context.

Don't be deceived, God is not mocked, He knows what you're thinking and He knows exactly what I'm thinking; and I'm telling you all this, and I'm laying bare motive before you. I don't even know what my motive is, but God does! and let us never be deceived, b&s, because He's not mocked. 'For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap'. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap and that's in the context of what you are now presently thinking about me giving you this address! and in the context of what I am presently thinking about you, talking to you about this chapter. So at this present moment of time, we are right in the centre of that verse, we are actually practising that verse and God is not mocked! and He knows, b&s, whether this weekend is going to be a success or not, because He knows exactly how you're applying yourself to that particular matter. We are right now in the centre of that verse in actual practice. You think of that! it's a tremendous issue, isn't it? and I know, you think, well, isn't this great? you wouldn't be here if you weren't and we all get on well together, but it doesn't always happen that way, and little things enter into our lives and intrude in it that sometimes pours a lot of discord in the ecclesia among teacher and taught, and we have to be extremely careful about that!

'For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting'. It really staggers me at times, you know, because what happens when you study the Word of God is that, you're carried through a whole series of details in the Word of God about this or that principle, that when the final thing is stated very often, it is so simple! It's so simple that it's above the more educated minds in our ecclesia. What could be more simple than going out into your field with a handful of wheat, and casting it into the ground, and waiting and waiting and waiting, and up comes a blade of grass, and you look at the leaf form, and my goodness, 'wheat!' Are you surprised? you know, b&s, of course you're not surprised! we'll get what we put in the ground, it's as simple as that. Therefore, whatever we're doing in the work of the truth, that's what we're going to get. Now I'm here and you're there! at the moment I'm trying to impress you that I'm a great speaker, if that's what I'm going to impress you with, that's what I'm sowing, and that's what I'll reap; and I'll have to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, and He'll remind me of the occasion that I spoke at Burwood in 1984, and He'll say, 'you expounded the Word of God, the Word of my heavenly Father, but this is how you did it! This was your motive! you're grass! well maybe I ought to have gone and said that; because I know my motives in measure, and what's the answer to that? 'that shall he reap!' It's as simple as that! So, brethren and sisters, it's a question of a very great diligence in our life, to plot and plan every course of action and to stand still very often, and plumb the very depths of that motive and proceed extremely carefully. It's a question of that!

Now says the apostle, 'let's not be weary in well doing: **for** in due season we shall reap, if we faint not'. In other words, b&s, the rewards of the truth are not immediate; the rewards of the truth are not immediate! There's a beautiful saying and you all know it so well in the 126th Psalm, 'he that goeth forth bearing precious seed, weeping, shall doubtless come again, with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him'. Now let's just for a

moment, translate that into a word picture. Here's a farmer, it's getting on towards the winter, it's been a bad year as before, and the corn that he's stored up, the seed that he's got left, has dwindled and dwindled and dwindled, until come that winter, it's time to plough and get the seed in. He goes to his storehouse and there's precious little left; he's got a family, and he puts that in his hand and he says, 'well, what do I do? what do I do? If I fling it into the ground, it may be that we'll have a good year this year, and it may be we won't. If we have a good year, my risk has been worth it; if we don't, then at least I could have kept my family alive for a bit longer! What will I do? will I keep it?' Well, he's a man of faith, b&s, and he takes that grain and out he goes. Tears running down his face as he thinks of his wife and children, with the little seed that he's got left, slung around his shoulder. Flinging it, flinging it! you just imagine it! rocky ground, ground parched, flinging it; that's his family's food and he's flinging it away, with tears running down his face. But he looks to heaven above, and soon comes the rain and comes the sunshine, and up it comes; and back he comes with arms full, with his heart bursting with rejoicing. Paul says, 'don't be weary in well doing! don't be miserly with the truth! don't study the Word and lock it up within yourself and say, 'well, darn everyone else, as long as I get my own private study'. Get that Word, b&s, and it's hard getting, you'll never know how hard it is for brethren who expound the Word of God; you think it's easy! Everyone's got all the confidence in the world in the brother speaking except him! 'Oh, you'll be alright, you'll be okay' and because it always goes okay, people think it's automatic. You'll never know the sweat and the tears that are over these pages, as a brother struggles, gets up from his desk, walks up and down in his room, goes outside, ponders hard, what does that mean! Until in the end, your hands have got corns from marking your bible, your heart is aching and your head is bursting, and you continue and continue and continue as in the Easter camp this year and I had 6 weeks left for Joshua. Not a mark in that bible, and I sweated and slaved over that, b&s, and I could wish myself that I had never accepted that camp, and when the final mark went into Joshua 8 (that's as far as I got in 24 chapters, that's all I could do) I thought to myself, 'well, terrific really, it's finished!', but oh boy! wasn't it absolutely glorious to throw that in the hall at Glenlock and all that sweat and tears and anguish of heart, b&s, was absolutely wonderful to spread that among the brethren and sisters. Every brother that's done that, knows the joy of it! It's all worth it but doesn't have immediate rewards. Of course, Paul's not talking either, about those rewards that we have even now, he's talking about the ultimate reward, isn't he? in due season! We've got to go out, not be weary in well doing but throw that seed out abroad, with our eyes to the heavens, and we'll come again with bundles of sheaves, hearts bursting with rejoicing before God. That, b&s, is a result of 'sowing to the Spirit', always in the end it's worth it. Never in the immediate does it seem to be worth it!

Therefore, says the apostle, 'As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all me'. Opportunities are rare! they are rare, seize them, b&s, seize those opportunities in ecclesial life, never say 'no' but seize every opportunity that comes your way because that's the very thing that will develop you in the things of God. If you're a young brother and you've got some ability (and I'm here now speaking in the context of speaking work

because that's where Paul's mind is) but if you are a young brother and you have abilities in the Word, and people say 'will you do this?' Say, YES! and if you would say it, say it recklessly if you like, because when you do, you're committed to it. As you therefore have opportunity, take it brethren, because you're committed to it then and the Word will discipline you, your very commitment will discipline you, and you will find the truth of what Paul is saying, that it's a weariness to apply yourself to that Word, but in due season it will have its own rewards.

Don't ever miss opportunities, do good unto all, he says, especially unto them, who are of the household of faith'. You know, I know that when that is quoted we say that we have a great responsibility to all men, we have to preach the gospel, but we have an extraordinary responsibility to the ecclesia. That's true, I'm not denying that, it's more true than perhaps we realize; but in this context, b&s, 'to the household of faith', Rotherham says, 'family of faith'. Do you see how vital it was here in the context of the Judaizer, **who were not of the family of faith**. There were those Galatians in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe who had a generation of bible students behind them, and Paul's words were, 'never miss an opportunity to help those poor souls of the Gentiles who didn't have that background, who are of the family of faith. You see what great need there was, b&s, in that particular context, not to be weary in well-doing.

Then Paul marches to his conclusion in this epistle, b&s, and in verse 11 he says, 'Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand'. Now people say, well, he means by that it's a long epistle; it isn't you know, in Hebrews 13, (I said 13, there's only 6 chapters here), in Hebrews 13 verse 22 he says, 'Ye see brethren, how I have written unto you in **few** words; so he can't mean by large letters, a long epistle, because it's less than half the Hebrews which he says was few words. What he did, b&s, was this, and this is classic! He come to the finale of his epistle, and he's going to make one final point, and the point he's going to make is not theoretical; whereas before he's been arguing in a theoretical way about doctrine and the ramifications of doctrine; the last point isn't going to be theoretical, it's going to be **practical**. What he's going to do is to bare his back to the Judaizers, and so when he came to the end of that epistle, I believe what he did, he took his pen and started to write in big letters, 'you see, brethren, with what LARGE letters I'm now writing'. He's about to take off his coat and turn his back and say, 'look at that! He's talking about circumcision, he's talking about making a fair show in the flesh, saying, 'well, I'm circumcised and I couldn't show you that', but I am, you know. Paul says, yes, you might be, but so am I, and across that back, b&s, the red welts standing up from his flesh, from the lashes for Christ's sake. I want to write that, he said, IN BIG LETTERS! that a man running might read it, and racing passed that back, b&s, with those welts, 'I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST', you couldn't miss the point, could you?

You talk about arguments, he said, you talk about your theories, you talk about the way you stand for principles and how that you're a man of God, and you do this and you do

that, where's your proof? What do you set before me, he says, as an argument, I'm sick of arguing! and you know, you get in this epistle at the end of it, b&s, 'let no man talk to me any more. I'm fed up with arguing, I've got a final poof! have a look! and a man running could read that, and he's writing that in big letters like this; you could argue all day and all night, b&s, about **theory**, but that you can't argue with. I believe, that would have been an impact upon the Galatians that would be absolutely fantastic. They wouldn't probably literally have seen that back, **I bear in my body the stigmata of the Lord Jesus**, I'm writing upon that! **the just shall live by faith!** a man running could read that! and that's the most powerful, powerful argument that could ever be presented, show me your faith without thy works, and I will show you my faith by my works; those arguments, b&s, are irrefutable arguments. Let's not talk about theory, let's talk about facts, says the apostle, and that's how this epistle concludes.

He says in verse 12, 'As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ'. You see, they made a fair show in the flesh, 'we've got a mark in our body', so have I, he says. But the mark in their body, b&s, was a mark of esteem and self pride, and they made a fair show in the flesh, and they constrained others to be circumcised, why? because of principle, yes, they said it was principle. You know they'd stand up and say, 'it's a principle of the Word, it's a principle of the Word', but in their hearts they were fearful that if they didn't get them circumcised, they would be persecuted by their brethren; and that was their motive! The little mark in their flesh which was a hidden thing, hid their motive, and their motive was **a fair show in the flesh**. 'We better do it because if we don't, look out!' But they didn't say that with their mouth, with their mouth - **it's a principle of the Word**. It was a principle of the Word, alright, and they're making a fair show in the flesh with that, b&s, and that's what they were saying.

Then says the apostle in verse 13, 'For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh'. You can see these Judaizers coming together on certain occasions, as doubtless they did, with the angel among them, the angel of light, Satan himself, the leader, the preeminent leader who put on airs as Paul said in the Corinthians, who put on all the graceful airs of a very upright and dignified and principled man; and you can see them standing together and saying, 'you know, we were able, brethren, to accomplish wonders in the work of Almighty God in Galatia, and there are now in the ecclesia there, many of those **poor** Gentiles, who are now circumcised; oh, don't praise me, brethren, it's a work of God; but there were about 40 you know that were circumcised as a result of my talk! Glorifying in their flesh! and flesh, b&s, look at the flesh, glorying in it, and this is why, Paul says, they were getting people circumcised for!

'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world'. You know, b&s, there, oh, dear, oh, dear, **there is circumcision!** Look what he's saying! Look at the cross of Christ, let

Paul describe it, b&s, in Colossians, turn this one up, let him describe it to us, here is circumcision: speaking of the circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ in verses 10 and 11 of Colossians 2, he says, 'Ye are complete in Him which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ'. Now look at verse 15, 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them **openly**, triumphing over them (the margin says) **in Himself**'. Now, b&s, let me paraphrase that! and I won't deviate one atom from its meaning and you'll see it's meaning: what did he say? When the Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised, it wasn't a mark in His flesh; it was the putting off, b&s, not merely sins but the body of the sins of the flesh. When a man is circumcised a minute part of his flesh is taken away, when the Lord was spiritually circumcised from sin, He **put away the body** of the sins of the flesh. Nothing minute about that! and as He hung there (this is the picture that Paul has in verse 15) 'He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself' and here is the picture, b&s, here He is on the cross, looking down with pitiful eyes into faces contorted with hate, and they spit up at Him, and the spittle would run down their own face, contorted in hate! He looks down with pitiful eyes and there are men down there, who are seized with the passion of **envy**, who hated Him for no other reason that He showed them up for what they were! They hated Him because He was good, they hated Him because He knew God's Word better than them; they hated Him because the people made Him popular not them, b&s, and their faces were contorted with hate; and He is there with their nature and He's got it under supreme control, and they are out of control. He's representing them, and He's making a show of them publicly in Himself, and they're bringing all the crowd around and trying by pointing to the crowd and saying, 'Look, He's dying a criminal's death', and they're trying to make a show of Him before the world, but He, b&s, is making **a show of them openly**.

You can imagine as the day wore on, and that tremendous character, there on that cross, hour after hour, with His attitude of mind and His demeanour and His disposition such as it was, you could imagine, b&s, there would have been some of them who would have wilted under that pressure. The Roman centurion standing there, at the beginning of the whole thing, with complete indifference, a man used to brutality every day of his life, commonplace, Jew's religion-who cared?, but at the end of the day, that was the Son of God! Those people there, slinking away in the darkness of that gloomy day, a natural gloom, going back to Jerusalem, knowing that on that day, the Lord Jesus had won the contest; and the feeling that they were criminals, miserable criminals, He made a show of them openly. The triumph was something He achieved for them in Himself, and the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and especially the pride of life, which in their case was absolutely unrestrained and rampant on that occasion, was in Him **supremely under control**. He was crucified, b&s, from the world, circumcised from them, and they were circumcised from Him. He had taken them and stripped them off Himself and said, 'I'm nothing like you', and they had taken Him and stripped him from their community and said, 'you're nothing like us', and their attitude

and His attitude put them in two different worlds. So Paul says, 'you talk about the mark in your body, you're talking about a little incision in your flesh, well, he said, I'm going to talk about Christ, and he said, I'm crucified from the world and the world unto me, and that's where we stand! You're not crucified with the world, you're friends with the world; you're lorded in high places in Roman governments, you have your ambassadors in the courts of the authorities of the day, you're held in high esteem by the world, and you've got a little mark on your body, but because I am crucified with Christ, the world hates me and I hate the world, and we're poles apart. That's where I stand, he says, and I glory in it'. He gloried in that! because that is true circumcision!

'For in Christ Jesus, he says, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation', as the word in the Greek would have us to understand. As he said in another place in Ephesians, 'we are created in Christ Jesus', a new creation. In the context of circumcision, that is significant, b&s, because you see, God created man and built within him, the power to procreate; and every man and woman has inbuilt in their flesh, the power to procreate. The immediate result of circumcision in the adult male, is he loses that power, and if only they could see the real significance of that, that immediately following circumcision in an adult male, he loses that power in the immediate future to procreate, there has to be a new creation. You know, b&s, it's not without significance that when Stephen was talking about the circumcision of Abraham and the birth of Isaac, although those two events were apart by quite a number of days, Stephen says this in the 7th chapter of Acts verse 8, 'and He gave him the covenant of circumcision, and so Abraham begat Isaac', and putting the two statements together like that, Stephen is trying to tell us, that though Isaac may have been the natural son of Abraham, had it not been for the power of God's Spirit, he could never have been created, and so circumcision in its spiritual outworking, b&s, spoke of the power of procreation being taken from man; so Paul says, 'circumcision avails nothing, nor uncircumcision; what really matters, b&s, is a **new creation**. So we are created in Christ Jesus unto all good works, says the apostle in Ephesians 2 verse 10.

Every brother and sister who gives up trying to create himself or herself or to create somebody else in his own image, when we give up, b&s, that sort of creation, procreation, and let God work in our lives to re-create in us a new creature, then Paul says, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace on them and mercy!' As many as walk according to that sphere of activity, a boundary; as many as walk within that limited boundary, where people are able to let God work in their lives, and there are not many people who do that, so it's a very limited sphere of activity upon them! what comes upon them? 'peace and mercy'. That's just the exact opposite of the affects of Law. For, Paul says in another place, 'Law worketh wrath and judgment; but the spiritual application, b&s, of what the truth is all about, serving one another, will bring down upon us, peace and mercy. You know, I like to luxuriate in words like that, when I get to a study, I might not do it here, because we haven't got the time, but quite often in my own personal study of things like that, I do something for myself, I don't do it for you. I stop, I lean back in my chair and I close my eyes and I say, what would I want from God?

ahhhhhh, peace, b&s, tranquillity of mind! assurance, a quiet confidence, that I can lift up my head and I think to myself, 'I will be in God's kingdom; peace! and I think about that. What follows is, of course, mercy. That's what we all need, mercy, and I suppose they are the two things that we cry for, the mercy of God and that peace that passeth all understanding.

They only come 'upon the Israel of God'. Or as Paul said in another place, describing the same class of people, he said, 'we are they who worship God according to the Spirit'. We are the circumcision of the Spirit, he said; not Israel but the Israel of God, that is a very limited sphere of activity, b&s. The boundaries of the Promised Land spiritually speaking are limited, 'as many as walk in accordance with that boundary upon the Israel of God', it's not a great big massive community of everybody that's been called, though it will be, of course, without number in that sense, because of the centuries of time. But according to this book here, and according to those circumstances, not all the Galatians will be in the kingdom. Those that would follow Judaism, b&s, weren't walking within the boundaries of that Israel! but upon that particular little country of spiritual Israel; the Israel of God, flying the flag of their freedom in Christ, was the flag of peace and mercy which became the insignia of their independence with God in the freedom they had in Jesus Christ our Lord; upon that Israel of God.

You can see him writing all this with big letters, and he gets to the finale, 'From henceforth let no man argue with me: here's my back! and he signed it off, b&s, with that. I'm finished arguing with you, I've argued backwards and forwards, I've set before you the principles of the Law, have tried to give humble illustrations of how these principles are in operation, I don't argue any more, don't let anyone argue with me anymore. I've got on my back the most powerful and the final argument. Look at it! and a man running can read that! Glorious, b&s, and he called those marks which he bore in his body, the marks or the word in the Greek is 'stigma' (4742) from which, of course, we get the word 'to stigmatize', I bear in my body the stigma of the Lord Jesus'. I want you to notice that! he calls Him in the next verse, the Lord Jesus Christ, but in the previous verse, b&s, he drops off the title 'Christ' because he wants them to see Jesus as the man; he wants them to go back in their minds to the day when He bore the marks. When Pilate brought Him out, the greatest argument ever presented before the Jews, I believe, to that point of time at least, when Pilate brought Him out and appeal after appeal after appeal, had no effect; 'crucify Him!' and the priests go among the crowd stirring up the people. 'Don't you accept it, don't you listen to Him, you demand His crucifixion', and the crowd shouting out, 'crucify Him!'; what wrong has He done? 'crucify Him!'; I'll release Him at the season, 'crucify Him!'; but look, He's innocent, 'crucify Him!'. Until Pilate resorted, b&s, to exactly the same argument as the apostle. He may not have had his high principles, but he brought Jesus out on the balcony, and stood Him there, 'behold, the man!' Look at Him, and every eye on the streets of Jerusalem, went up there to that balcony, 'behold, the man' and the brow, b&s, lacerated, torn to shreds, the face all puffy, bruised, and the nose all out of joint, eyebrows hanging over,

head bent, heavy breathing, 'behold the man!' It didn't have any effect, 'crucify Him'. That's what Paul did at the end, didn't he? I won't argue anymore, have a look at my back! the Lord Jesus, He was Lord, but He was a man, and even that didn't have any effect on them, they took Him out, b&s, and finished what they'd started.

Brethren (adelphos - 80) Christadelphians, brethren, the word meaning 'out of the same womb', a real family, the grace, 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen'.